

This Page Is Inserted by IFW Operations
and is not a part of the Official Record

BEST AVAILABLE IMAGES

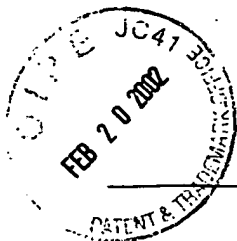
Defective images within this document are accurate representations of the original documents submitted by the applicant.

Defects in the images may include (but are not limited to):

- BLACK BORDERS
- TEXT CUT OFF AT TOP, BOTTOM OR SIDES
- FADED TEXT
- ILLEGIBLE TEXT
- SKEWED/SLANTED IMAGES
- COLORED PHOTOS
- BLACK OR VERY BLACK AND WHITE DARK PHOTOS
- GRAY SCALE DOCUMENTS

IMAGES ARE BEST AVAILABLE COPY.

As rescanning documents *will not* correct images,
please do not report the images to the
Image Problem Mailbox.



COPY OF PAPERS
ORIGINALLY FILED

PATENT

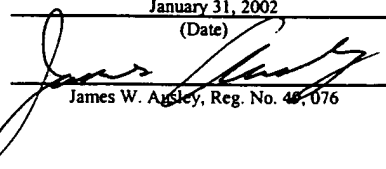
Case Docket No. RJENK24.001AUS
Date: January 29, 2002

3626
5

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant(s) : Barry Brown
Appl. No. : 09/989893
Filed : November 19, 2001
For : MAIL BAG
Examiner : Unknown
Group Art Unit : 3626

I hereby certify that this correspondence and all
marked attachments are being deposited with the
United States Postal Service as first class mail in
an envelope addressed to: Assistant Commissioner
for Patents, Washington, D.C. 20231, on

January 31, 2002
(Date)

James W. Ausley, Reg. No. 49,076

TRANSMITTAL LETTER

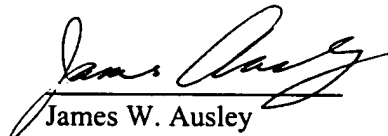
ASSISTANT COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20231
ATTENTION: APPLICATION BRANCH

RECEIVED
FEB 27 2002
GROUP 3600

Dear Sir:

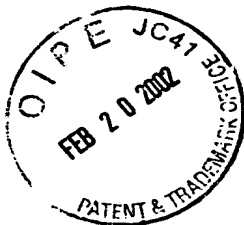
Enclosed for filing in the above-identified application are:

- (X) (1) One certified copy of GB0028143.6.
- (X) The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required, or credit any overpayment, to Account No. 11-1410.
- (X) Return prepaid postcard.


James W. Ausley
Registration No. 49,076
Agent of Record



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



The Patent Office

Concept House

Cardiff Road

Newport

South Wales

NP10 8QQ FEB 27 2002

RECEIVED

GROUP 3600

I, the undersigned, being an officer duly authorised in accordance with Section 74(1) and (4) of the Deregulation & Contracting Out Act 1994, to sign and issue certificates on behalf of the Comptroller-General, hereby certify that annexed hereto is a true copy of the documents as originally filed in connection with the patent application identified therein.

I also certify that the attached copy of the request for grant of a Patent (Form 1/77) bears an amendment, effected by this office, following a request by the applicant and agreed to by the Comptroller-General.

I also certify that by virtue of an assignment registered under the Patents Act 1977, the application is now proceeding in the name as substituted.

In accordance with the Patents (Companies Re-registration) Rules 1982, if a company named in this certificate and any accompanying documents has re-registered under the Companies Act 1980 with the same name as that with which it was registered immediately before re-registration save for the substitution as, or inclusion as, the last part of the name of the words "public limited company" or their equivalents in Welsh, references to the name of the company in this certificate and any accompanying documents shall be treated as references to the name with which it is so re-registered.

In accordance with the rules, the words "public limited company" may be replaced by p.l.c., plc, P.L.C. or PLC.

Re-registration under the Companies Act does not constitute a new legal entity but merely subjects the company to certain additional company law rules.

Signed

Andrew Gery

Dated 12 NOV 2001



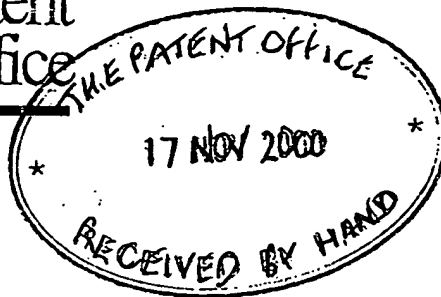
INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

GB0028143.6

By virtue of a direction given under Section 30 of the Patents Act 1977, the application is proceeding in the name of

CONSIGNIA PLC.
Incorporated in the United Kingdom
148 Old Street
LONDON
EC1V 9HQ
United Kingdom

[ADP No. 08159154001]



Request for grant of a patent

(See the notes on the back of this form. You can also get an explanatory leaflet from the Patent Office to help you fill in this form)

The Patent Office

Cardiff Road
Newport
Gwent NP9 1RH

1. Your reference

HL76372/001/CIV

17 NOV 2000

2. Patent application number

(The Patent Office will fill in this part)

0028143.6

20NOV00 E584774-2 D02847
PA1/7700 0.00-0028143.6

3. Full name, address and postcode of the or of each applicant (underline all surnames)

The Post Office
Legal Services-IP
Impact House
Bridge Road
Croydon CR9 1PY
United Kingdom

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

740 635 8002

If the applicant is a corporate body, give the country/state of its incorporation

United Kingdom

SECTION 80(1)(a) APPLICATION FILED 22.05.01

4. Title of the invention

MAIL BAGS

5. Full name of your agent (*if you have one*)

Hazeltine Lake & Co.

D.G.C. JEMINS & CO
26 CAXTON STREET
LONDON
SW1H 0BJ

"Address for service" in the United Kingdom to which all correspondence should be sent (*including the postcode*)

Imperial House
15-19 Kingsway
London WC2B 6UD

Patents ADP number (*if you know it*)

34001

950001

6. If you are declaring priority from one or more earlier patent applications, give the country and the date of filing of the or of each of these earlier applications and (*if you know it*) the or each application number

Country

Priority application number
(*if you know it*)

Date of filing
(day/month/year)

7. If this application is divided or otherwise derived from an earlier UK application, give the number and the filing date of the earlier application

Number of earlier application

Date of filing
(day/month/year)

8. Is a statement of inventorship and of right to a grant of patent required in support of this request? (Answer "Yes" if:

YES

- a) any applicant named in part 3 is not an inventor, or
 - b) there is an inventor who is not named as an applicant, or
 - c) any named applicant is a corporate body.
- See note (d))

following items you are filing with this form.
Do not count copies of the same document

Continuation sheets of this form 0

Description 4 /

Claim(s) 1 /

Abstract 0

RN

Drawing(s) 4 + 4

10. If you are also filing any of the following,
state how many against each item.

Priority documents 0

Translations of priority documents 0

Statement of inventorship and right
to a grant of patent (Patents Form 7/77) 0

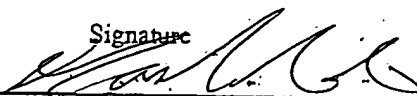
Request for preliminary examination
and search (Patents Form 9/77) 0

Request for substantive examination
(Patents Form 10/77) 0

Any other documents
(please specify) 0

11. I/We request the grant of a patent on the basis of this application

Signature



Date

17 November 2000

12. Name and daytime telephone number of
person to contact in the United Kingdom

Mr. C. I. Vigars

[0117] 9103200

Warning

After an application for a patent has been filed, the Comptroller of the Patent Office will consider whether publication or communication of the invention should be prohibited or restricted under Section 22 of the Patents Act 1977. You will be informed if it is necessary to prohibit or restrict your invention in this way. Furthermore, if you live in the United Kingdom, Section 23 of the Patents Act 1977 stops you from applying for a patent abroad without first getting written permission from the Patent Office unless an application has been filed at least 6 weeks beforehand in the United Kingdom for a patent for the same invention and either no direction prohibiting publication or communication has been given, or any such direction has been revoked.

Notes

- If you need help to fill in this form or you have any questions, please contact the Patent Office on 0645 500505.
- Write your answers in capital letters using black ink or you may type them.
- If there is not enough space for all the relevant details on any part of this form, please continue on a separate sheet of paper and write "see continuation sheet" in the relevant part(s). Any continuation sheet should be attached to this form.
- If you have answered "Yes" Patents Form 7/77 will need to be filed.
- Once you have filled in the form you must remember to sign and date it.
- For details of the fee and ways to pay please contact the Patent Office.

MAIL BAG

The present invention relates to mail bags, and in particular to hooks for attachment to mail bags for supporting the mail bags in frame fittings.

5

BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

Figure 1 of the accompanying drawings illustrates, in plan view, a frame 1 for supporting mail bags. The frame 1 is often known as a "drop bag fitting" (DBF) frame, and is usually rectangular or square in plan view. At each internal corner of frame 1, a locating wire or projection 2 is provided. The locating projections 2 are provided for supporting a mail bag within the frame in such a way that the mail bag is supported in an open position.

Figure 2 illustrates a mail bag 4 which is suitable for support in the drop bag fitting frame 1 of Figure 1. The mail bag 4 has a number (in this case 4) of mail bag hooks 5 arranged around its open end. To support the mail bag the hooks 5 are positioned over the locating projections 2 of the frame 1, thereby holding the mail bag in place in the frame.

However, existing designs of mail bag hook 5 are less than ideal. For example, one disadvantage of present design of hook is that they do not retain the mail bag in place on the locating projections of the frame, particularly before the mail bag is filled with mail. One particular existing design uses horizontal wings which extend along the open edge of the mail bag, which wings engage under the frame 1 to retain the bag in place. However, to release these wings can take a considerable effort and operators sometimes find that the hook section moulded to the wing section breaks under the load. This then leaves a sharp end section of plastic which has caused injury to operators.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENT INVENTION

Accordingly, it is desirable to provide a mail bag hook which can overcome the drawbacks of the presently considered hooks, and that provides secure location of a mail bag on the frame, while still allowing relatively straight forward removal of the hook from the projection.

According to one aspect of the present invention, there is provided a hook for a mail bag, the hook comprising a retaining portion for attachment to a region of the mail bag adjacent to an open end thereof, the retaining portion extending substantially perpendicular to the open end of the mail bag, and a suspension ring which extends from the retaining portion and defines an aperture through which a locating projection can be inserted,

wherein the hook is provided with a resilient portion which extends in the aperture of the hook, such that in use, the portion is deflected.

According to another aspect of the present invention, there is provided a hook for a mail bag, the hook comprising:

a planar attachment portion for attachment to a mail bag, the attachment portion defining a longitudinal axis;

a planar supporting portion which extends from the attachment portion in the direction of the longitudinal axis, and which is planar with the attachment portion, the supporting portion defining an aperture therethrough, and

a retaining portion which extends in the plane of the supporting portion, and which partially occludes the aperture of the supporting portion, the retaining portion being resiliently deformable out of the plane of the supporting portion.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

Figure 1 illustrates a drop bag fitting (DBF) frame;

5 Figure 2 illustrates a mail bag;

Figure 3 illustrates a mail bag hook embodying one aspect of the present invention;

10 Figure 4 illustrates the hook of Figure 3 prior to attachment to the frame of Figure 1; and

Figure 5 illustrates the hook of Figure 3 attached to the frame of Figure 1.
15

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS

Figure 3 illustrates a mail bag hook 5 embodying the present invention. The hook is generally planar (as can be more clearly seen in Figure 4) and extends along a longitudinal axis 8. In the embodiment of Figure 3, the hook is symmetrical about the longitudinal axis 8. The hook 5 is attached to the mail bag 4 by stitching the attachment portion 7 to edge of the mail bag at its open end. In use, the hook is arranged so that the longitudinal extends substantially perpendicular to the edge of the mail bag 4.
20
25

30 The hook 5 also includes a supporting portion 9 which extends in the direction of the longitudinal axis from the attachment portion 7. This supporting portion 9 extends away from the end of the mail bag 4 when the hook is attached thereto. The supporting portion defines an aperture 10 through which the locating projection 2 of the frame 1 can be inserted.
35

The hook also includes a retaining portion 11 which partially extends across the aperture 10. The retaining portion is resiliently deformable, such that it can bend out of the plane of the hook about a hinge point 13. The retaining portion 11 has a curved top profile 15 which engages with the locating projections 2 of the frame 1 when the hook is in use.

Figure 4 illustrates a cross sectional view of a hook 5 and a locating projection 2 mounted on the frame 1, prior to attachment of the hook to the projection. It will be more clear for Figure 4 that the hook in this undeformed state is planar, with the retaining portion 11 being within the supporting portion 9.

Figure 5 illustrates the hook 5 attached to the projection 2 on the frame 1. In order to attach the hook to the projection, the hook is placed over the projection such that the projection extends through the aperture 10 of the hook. The projection 2 bends or deforms the retaining portion of the hook out of the plane of the hook as illustrated in Figure 5. The resilience of the retaining portion presses its curved top profile 15 against the underside of the projection 2 so as to hold the hook in place against the projection 2. This prevents the hook from being inadvertently lifted from the projection 2. However, the resilience of the retaining portion is such that only a relatively small force is required to lift the hook from the locating projection when required.

It will therefore be appreciated that a hook embodying the present invention can overcome the disadvantages of the presently-used mail bag hook.

CLAIMS:

1. A hook for a mail bag, the hook comprising:
a planar attachment portion for attachment to a
5 mail bag, the attachment portion defining a
longitudinal axis;

a planar supporting portion which extends from the
attachment portion in the direction of the longitudinal
axis, and which is planar with the attachment portion,
10 the supporting portion defining an aperture
therethrough, and

a retaining portion which extends in the plane of
the supporting portion, and which partially occludes
the aperture of the supporting portion, the retaining
15 portion being resiliently deformable out of the plane
of the supporting portion.

2. A hook as claimed in claim 1, wherein the
supporting portion defines a continuous boundary around
the aperture.

20 3. A hook as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein
the supporting portion is elongate and extends from a
base portion connected with the attachment portion to a
tip portion, thereby defining an elongate aperture.

4. A hook as claimed in claim 3, wherein the
25 retaining portion extends from the base portion towards
the tip portion.

5. A mail bag comprising a bag having an edge
region defining an open end of the bag, and a plurality
of hooks, each of which is a hook as claimed in any one
30 of the preceding claims, the longitudinal axis of each
hook being substantially perpendicular to the edge
region of the bag.

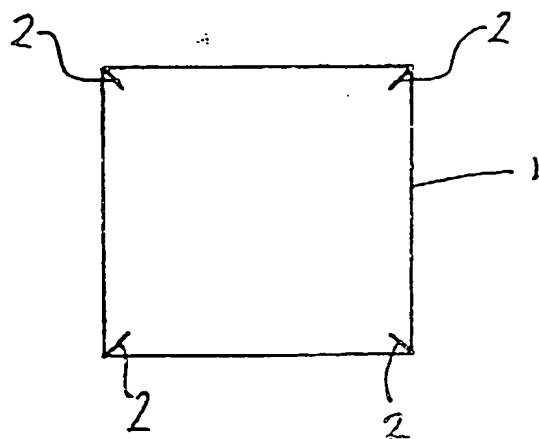


FIGURE 1

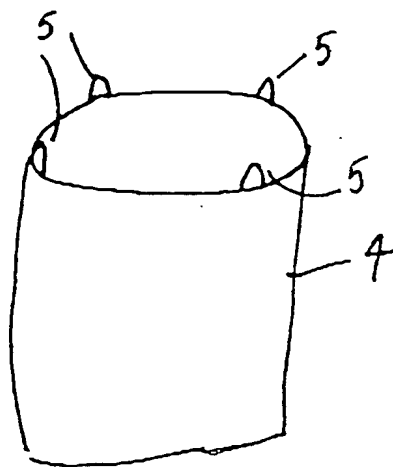
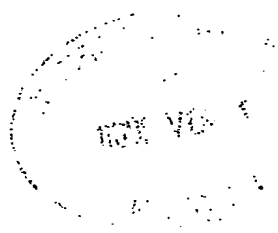


FIGURE 2



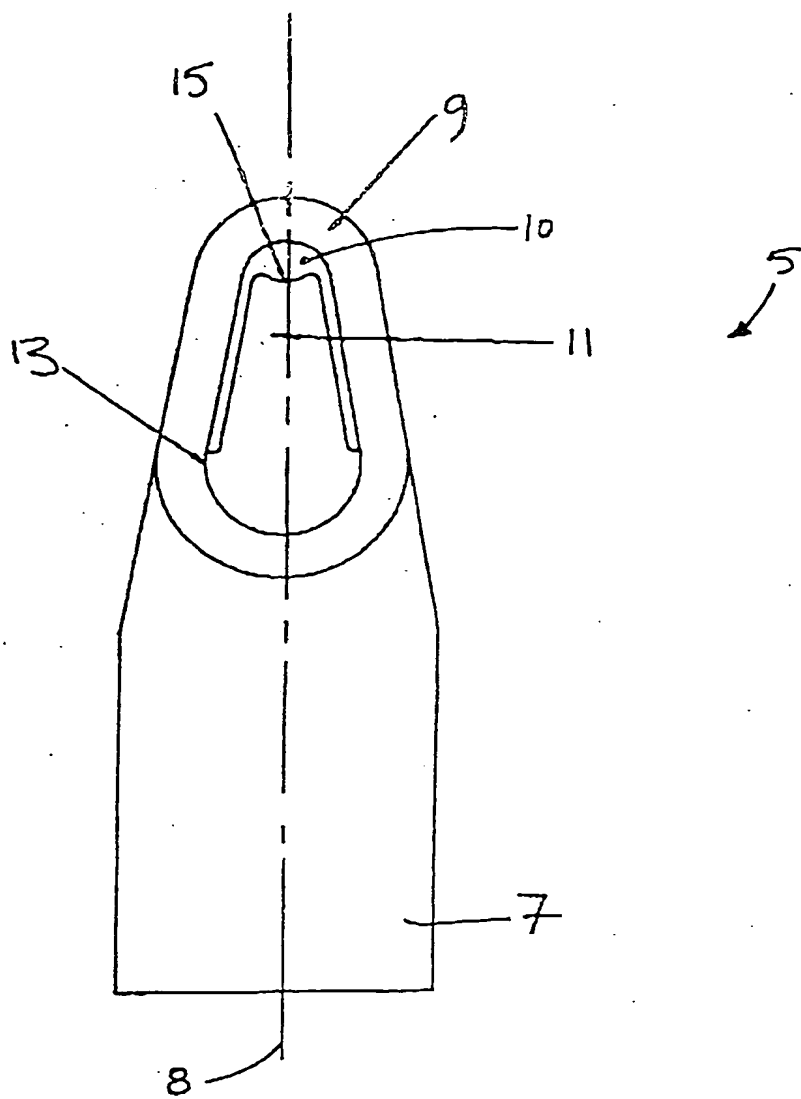


FIGURE 3

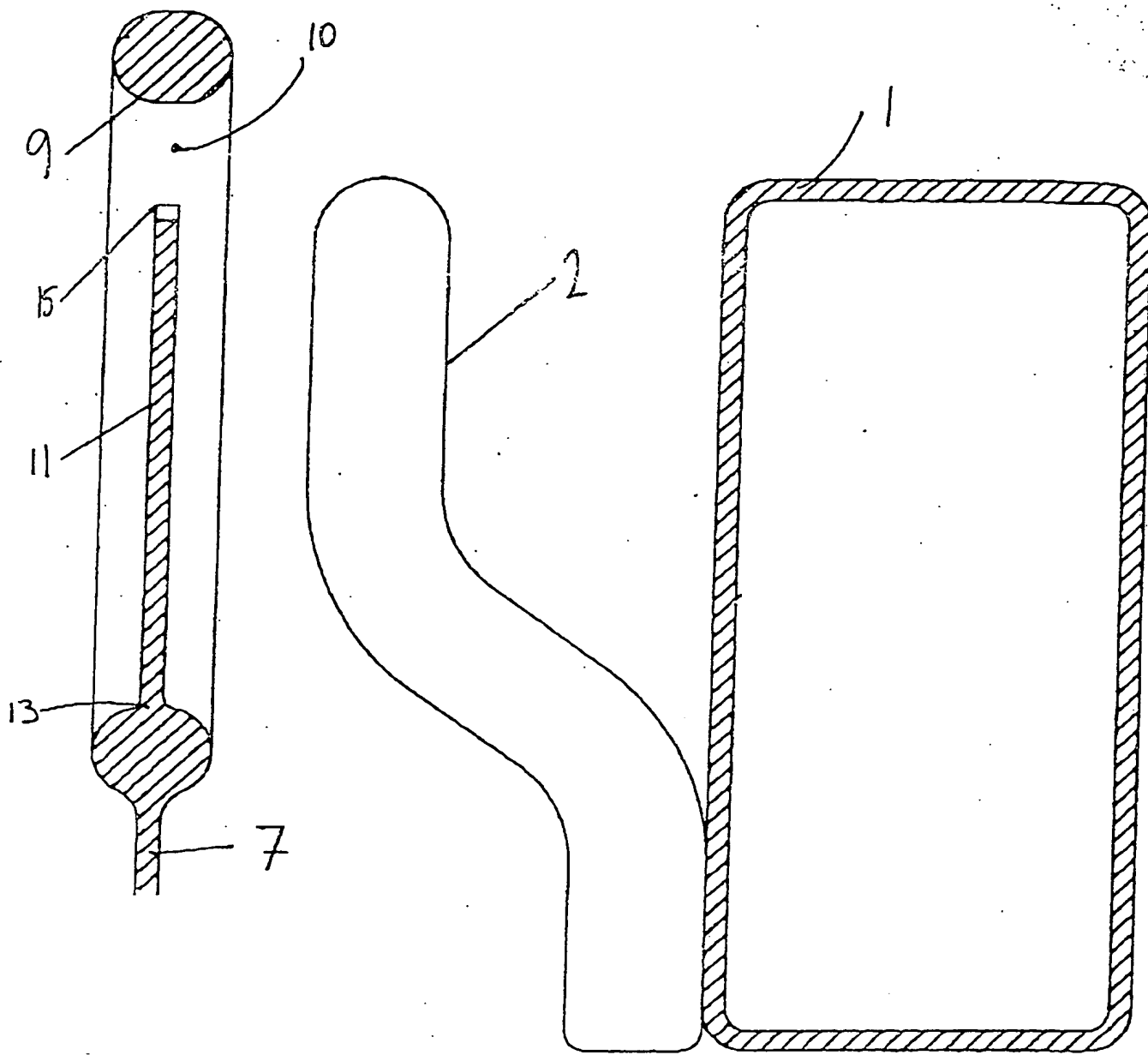


Figure 4

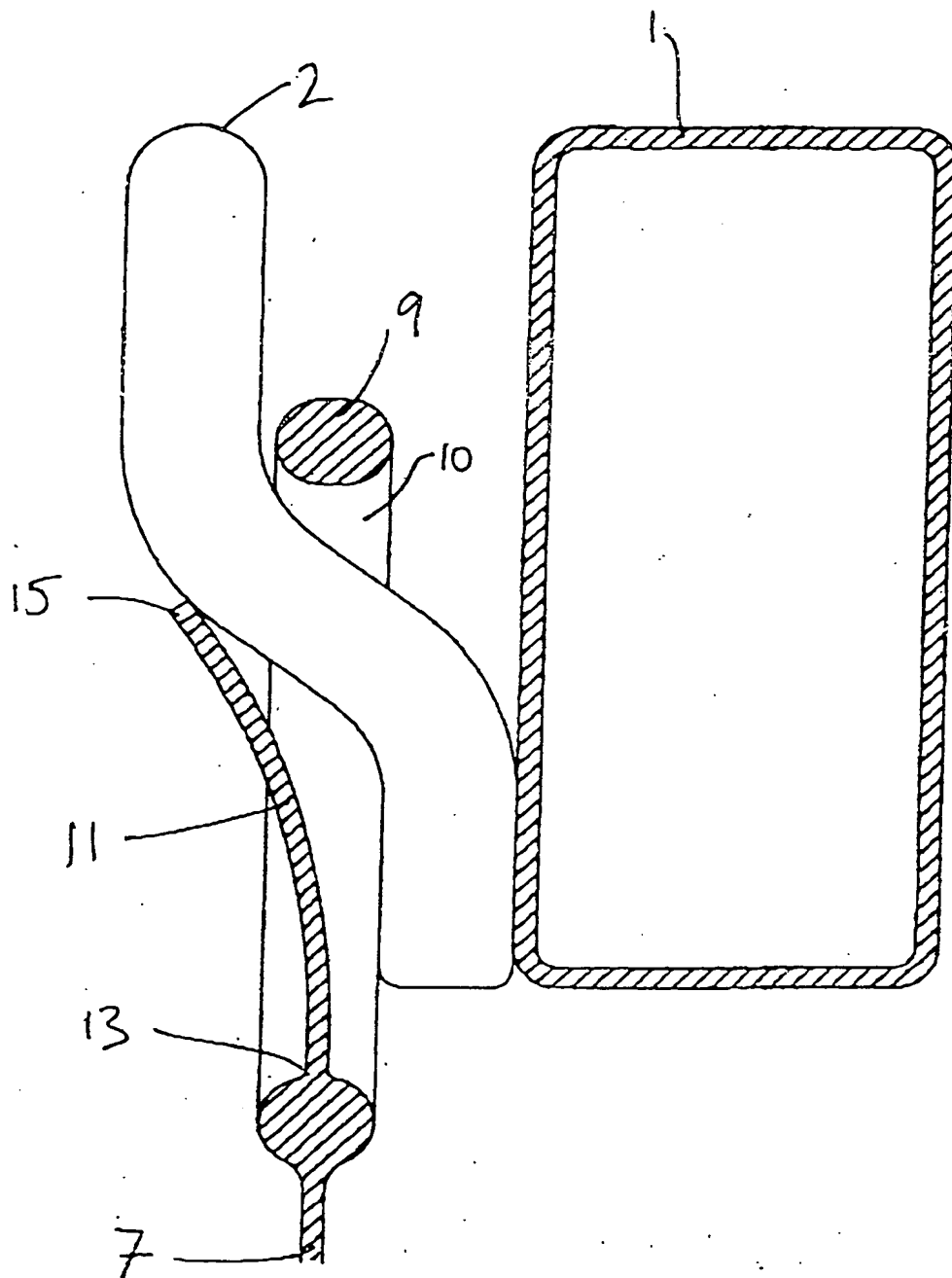


FIGURE 5